background which most materially marred the intended measure. He still had hope that any new measure to be brought forward will be for the benefit of the community in general, but especially for the poorer classes. The noble lord (Lincoln) at the head of the Woods and Forests had, at the opposition in April last, taken the impression that this society wished by all and by any means to prevent a new bill passing through the House; but from the various communications with this society, I can now say that his lordship entertains quite a different view, and is convinced that the best services of this society will be rendered in enabling the Government to pass a bill that will benefit generally the extensive population likely to come within its provisions. It would perhaps be trespassing too much on their time to notice generally the provisions in the intended bill, but he could not help calling the attention of the society to the 20th section. This, if permitted to stand, would operate most injuriously to almost EVERY householder in EVERY district comprised within the range of this Act, inasmuch as every room not being in area 100 feet superficial is prohibited from being *occupied*. In *fourth-rate* houses, *especially* the back rooms, built under the old Building Act, cannot, or do not contain 100 feet superficial; so that what has been built orthodox, or according to Act of Parliament for three-quarters of a century, would by this "amended bill" be prohibited from occupation. In almost every house there is a dressing-room, a library, or a store-room, which may not contain 100 superficial feet; all these will be subject to a serious penalty if occupied under the intended Act. The fees also under the "amended bill" will have to be considered; and although the fees are the emoluments of the district surveyors, it is but right to state that at the several interviews he has had with the district surveyors, they have all expressed themselves perfectly satisfied with the old fees, and in some instances, as in the smaller houses, have been induced to consent to a scale of reduction. Having thus shewn so much has been done in paving the way for any new bill, he hoped the society would name some other person as president; at the same time the society should have his best services in the working out any future measure.

The society, however, coming to an unanimous vote that the president be re-elected, he very handsomely consented to their wishes, at all events until the passing of the Buildings Bill.

After naming new members, and some other business being transacted, the society adjourned until the last Wednesday in January, when the correspondence with Lord Lincoln upon the intended New Buildings Bill will be laid before the board, and the proposing and balloting new members will take place at this meeting.

MR. THOMPSON'S FIRE ESCAPE.

THIS is a simple and ingenious invention for preserving persons from being burnt in houses that are on fire. The contrivance by which they are to be saved from the flames is this:—A rope, the two ends of which are held in the street by policemen, or other persons present, is elevated by means of a pole, consisting of pieces fastened together after the manner of a fishing-rod, to the window of the house from which the inmates are to be rescued; the rope is then to be secured in the room by passing it round a book or heavy piece of furniture, and the two ends in the street being pulled apart so as to form an angle, a belt, which is secured upon them by strong iron rivets, is forced up to the windows, by means of two small iron wheels or sheaves, almost instantaneously. The apparatus will carry a man secured by the belt, up to a window at the very top of the house, and will, by means of the ends of the ropes being kept tight and manned at such a distance as the occasion requires, enable any one to descend by means of the belt, without any danger from too great rapidity. The machine was tried in Sydney's-alley, in Adam-street, Adelphi, and in Wellington-street, Strand, when repeated ascents to and descents from windows were made with complete success. The invention is so simple and so manageable that any person can avail himself or herself of it.

COURT OF EXCHEQUER.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL *v.* GRAVES.—IMPORTANT CASE.

THIS was an information, at the instance of the Excise department, against the defendant, for using bricks for the ordinary purposes of building which were made duty free for draining wet and marshy land. The Attorney-General said, that, although the case had taken a turn which would prevent it from occupying the attention of the Court for a considerable time, he thought it his duty shortly to state its involuntary infraction of the law. It was probably known to every one who heard him, that an Excise duty was imposed upon bricks generally, but it was thought expedient by the legislature to encourage the drainage of marshy land by exempting from duty bricks used *solely for that purpose*. Accordingly, the stat. 2 & 3 Vict. c. 24. s. 18, provided that bricks for the sole purpose of draining wet and marshy land, being stamped or moulded with the word "drain," in or near the centre of the surface of such bricks, should not be chargeable with duty. But, in order to prevent this exemption from being made the means of evading the duty, it was also provided by the same section "that it shall not be lawful for any person to employ or make use of any such bricks for any other purpose than in draining wet and marshy lands, and any maker of such bricks, or other person, who shall sell, or use, any brick with the word 'drain' so stamped or moulded thereon, for any other purpose than as aforesaid, shall forfeit 50*l*." Now the offence charged by this information was, using bricks exempt from duty, with the word "drain" thereon, for making party-walls and back-walls of a house. For this offence the defendant had incurred heavy penalties, and the Excise department thought it their duty to protect the revenue by suing for those penalties. It was intimated to him, that the defendant was desirous to acknowledge that he had violated the law, though he alleged that he was wholly unacquainted with the provisions of the statute which he had infringed. He need scarcely observe, that this ignorance was not a legal justification, although it might entitle the defendant to a more indulgent consideration.

Mr. B. Andrews said his client could not deny that he had violated the provisions of the Act of Parliament, but he thought the jury could well believe that it was done in entire ignorance, as he (Mr. A.) was free to confess that, until the brief he now held was placed in his hand, he was ignorant of the particular enactment on which this information was founded.

A verdict was then taken for the Crown, it was understood, with mitigated penalties.

TOWN COUNCIL, BATH.

DISPUTE ON AN ARCHITECT'S ACCOUNT.

A BILL of Mr. Manners of 351*l*. 6s. 10d., including the amount of per-centage charged for plans and estimates, on the expenditure for building the new gaol, gave rise to a question as to whether it included the 900*l*. admitted mistake in the figures carried out by one of his clerks (deceased) in copying his calculations, and which, when discovered, was frankly laid before the council, discussed, and partly allowed.

Mr. Davis said as one of the committee when the bill was brought before them, he objected to different items of it. Having adverted to the mistake in Mr. Manners's calculations, and the mode in which the matter was settled by the council, he added that Mr. Lewis having made also a mistake against himself of 600*l*., agreed to forego his claim of the 900*l*., to save Mr. Manners from the loss to which he had rendered himself liable by the miscalculation, provided the council would allow him the 600*l*. mistake of his own. Mr. Manners in a letter to the council acknowledged his liability to pay the 900*l*., but the council consented to Mr. Lewis's proposal, and saved the 300*l*. He (Mr. Davis) thought it unhandsome that he should have charged his per-centage as if the whole 900*l*. in addition to the original contract had been laid out, whereas it was only about 600*l*. which had been actually paid.

Mr. Barrette said there were items charged in the bills for services which he should have thought came within his province as the city architect. He should rather the bill was referred to another committee than the Gaol Building Committee for further consideration.

Mr. Hunt considered it unreasonable that such a course should be taken; for if the council had not taken advantage of Mr. Manners's mistake, why should they subtract from him for work actually done? He could not see the justice of the principle of recognizing the value of the work performed, and refusing the charge upon the amount.

After the question was further debated, Mr. Barrette moved that the bill be referred to the Finance Committee.

Mr. Gore said the charge of 3½ per cent. made was not upon the original estimates, but upon the work actually done, and was under the usual rate of charge. It was not fair to introduce the question about Mr. Lewis's mistake, as affecting it.

Mr. Jolly thought as the estimates had at first amounted to 15,000*l*., and the council had paid 600*l*. more (the amount of Mr. Lewis's error) than they would have paid but for the mistake of Mr. Manners, the per-centage charge was in fact on that error.

After a few words from Mr. Davis, the motion of Mr. Barrette was seconded by Mr. Edridge.

Mr. Samuel said as one of the committee, he remembered that the 300*l*. was given up to the council by Mr. Lewis on condition that there was to be 10 per cent. difference in the advances made to him on the progress of the work; and it was never contemplated that the charge of Mr. Manners would be made upon an amount above what was actually paid.

Mr. Fuller moved as an amendment that the bill should be referred back to the same committee, as being in possession of all the facts and circumstances best to enable them to judge of the case. It would likewise (he said) be rather a dangerous precedent to set up one committee to revise the reports of another.

The amendment was seconded by Mr. Gill; but on being put was lost by a majority of 18 to 10, and the original motion carried.

ON THE CHOICE OF A HOUSE.

WE are indebted to Mr. Loudon's excellent work "The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion," for the following extract on a subject which we think will be found interesting to our non-professional readers. Although Mr. Loudon's various works are too well known to require any notice from us, yet we cannot abstain from referring to this particular volume, as containing information of considerable value to all parties connected with house property in the country, or in the immediate neighbourhood of the metropolis. Besides, we cannot but think that the following advice may derive additional force from the fact that he to whose well-stored and experienced mind we are indebted for so much that is valuable and instructive, is no longer among the living.

Many persons who have not had much experience in the choice of a house are captivated by the exterior; and are more influenced by its picturesque effect, than by any property in the dwelling connected with habitableness. One person is an admirer of the Gothic; without considering that, unless the number of windows in such a house is greater than in a building in the Roman or Italian style, the rooms will be ill lighted from the thickness of the mullions and the smallness of the panes; and probably, also, not well ventilated, from the defective manner in which Gothic windows generally open.

Some prefer a cottage with latticed windows, and surrounded by creepers; not considering that the rooms in such buildings are very frequently low, ill lighted, and badly ventilated; the floors subject to the dry-rot, and the walls to damp: for, notwithstanding the beauty of flowering creepers, there is not a single kind of creeping plant which will grow against a house that does not make the walls damp, with the single exception of the ivy.

Others prefer a house with a veranda all

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